



Community Newsletter 2003

Fire & Fuels Information

Make an Appointment Now! Defensible Space Home Evaluations

As California residents, we live in a fire-prone environment. While this flammable situation is largely due to our beautiful natural vegetation and warm climate, wildfire conditions are becoming more severe as development increases in previously undeveloped, natural areas. The homes and communities in these areas make up the *wildland-urban interface*. While we must accept a certain amount of risk in our decision to live in the interface, there are things we can do to protect our homes and property. Fire protection and defensible space are everyone's responsibility.

What is Defensible Space?

Simply put, defensible space is a safe area that you create around your home to increase its chances of surviving a wildfire. During fire emergencies, firefighters focus attention on homes with defensible space because there is a safe area for them to work.

Defensible space is not just yard work. It is thinking about your home's place in the environment and making sensible choices about landscaping, building materials, and access. Just think of the difference you could make if you partnered with your neighbors to create larger defensible zones?

Are you creating defensible space?



Free Home-Evaluation Service

This summer, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, in partnership with the Student Conservation Association, will host a special fire intern position between June and October. This intern will offer free home evaluations for local residents both inside and outside the parks. By appointment, the intern will meet personally with residents on their property to provide defensible space tips.

What Will the Evaluation Include?

Enlisting a pair of "objective eyes" to evaluate your home can help you plan your defensible space. The intern will help you recognize a variety of issues: 1) the presence of flammable vegetation, 2) trees, brush, and grass that need trimming, 3) wood piles too close to structures, 4) debris on your roof, in the gutters, or near the chimney, 5) the absence of road and address signs, 6) obstructed access to your property, and 7) flammable building materials.

Creating defensible space around your home does not mean removing all plants. Let our intern help you plan locations for trees and shrubs that can help to prevent ground fires from moving into the tree-tops or onto your roof.

The intern does not have any authority to enforce California defensible space regulations. Enforcement is handled in this area by the California Department of Forestry, the National Park Service, or the U.S. Forest Service, depending on where you live.

How to Schedule a Free Appointment

If you would like to schedule a free home evaluation,



ation, please call (559) 565-3703 or email jody_lyle@nps.gov. Your request will be forwarded to the intern who will call you back to schedule an appointment.

This special service is funded by the National Fire Plan as part of the Wildland-Urban Interface Initiative. Similar interns are stationed on public lands and in private communities across the country.

Defensible Space Websites

- Firewise Communities - www.firewise.org
- California Fire Alliance - www.cafirealliance.org
- Fire Safe Council - www.firesafecouncil.org
- Student Conservation Association - www.thesca.org

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Two Ways to "Click" & Learn!

#1 New Webpage



The parks are pleased to offer a new "Current Fire Information" webpage. Go to www.nps.gov/seki and click on "Fire Information." Visitors and neighbors can access this site at any time to read: 1) press releases, 2) current fire restrictions, 3) the annual fire and fuels project list, and 4) smoke information.

#2 Email Updates

If you would like to receive email updates about fire and fuels management activities during fire season, please send a message to:

jody_lyle@nps.gov

In the message, tell us your name, your email address, and the community list you would like to be on:

Three Rivers
Mineral King Area
Wilsonia
All Other Communities

NPS Firefighters Make Good Neighbors

July 3, 2002 was hot and dry like most summer days in Three Rivers. As most local residents readied themselves for the Independence-Day holiday, a few homes in Three Rivers were saved from a fire...with a little help from their neighbors. What happened?

At 10:30 a.m., a car driving on Highway 198 suddenly lost a tire. The resulting sparks ignited a grass fire near Pierce Road just west of Bullene's Vineyard. Even though the fire was located on lands protected by the California Department of Forestry (CDF), the dispatch center called for additional help from the National Park Service (NPS).

With CDF Battalion Chief Jim Hall serving as the incident commander, the NPS provided the first handcrew and helicopter on scene. Crew 9I, stationed at park headquarters, constructed fireline. The park helicopter dropped water on the fire. Within two hours, the Pierce Fire was contained at just ten acres and the homes were saved.

Why were park resources dispatched to a fire in a CDF area? This happened because CDF and the NPS have a *Mutual Aid Agreement* that allows both agencies to help the other with the initial attack of fires. In fact, Sequoia and Kings Canyon have similar agreements with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the

U.S. Forest Service (USFS), too. Mutual aid often involves traveling to other areas in Tulare and Fresno counties, but mostly it means helping out in our adjacent communities, like Three Rivers or Pinehurst. Similarly, CDF and the other agencies help in the parks when needed.

Most local residents know that Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks have an active fire and fuels management program that includes prescribed fire and wildland fire use. Park employees are professionally trained with fire management skills for ecosystem restoration but these skills are equally applicable to structure protection. With a summertime fire staff of approximately 80 employees (with associated fire engines, crews, and a helicopter), the NPS contributes a large percentage of the skilled firefighter pool available to respond in Kaweah Country.

Last fall the parks received a letter from a neighbor whose home on Sycamore Drive was protected by NPS firefighters. "Your firefighting team alertly recognized the situation and quickly took action to bring the fire under control," the homeowner wrote. "We are fortunate to live in an area where park personnel are so well trained and competent." The parks appreciate this recognition and will continue to be good neighbors.



During a training session, a park helitack employee learns a "hover hook-up" to attach water bags or cargo slings for future missions. In summer, this ship and its crew are available to respond to incidents both inside and outside the parks. Stationed at Ash Mountain on contract from June 1 to October 18 each year, *Helicopter-552* is piloted and maintained by *Rogers Helicopters* in Fresno, California.

Fire & Fuels Project Locations for 2003

The fire and fuels management program at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks tries to protect ecosystems and communities. This important work is accomplished by restoring fire's natural role in the environment and by reducing hazardous fuels. Each year, managers prepare an **Annual Fuels Treatment Plan** that lists all the approved prescribed burns and mechanical fuel reduction projects that will help the parks accomplish their goals.

The information below identifies **13 projects** totaling **6,291 acres** (8 are burn projects and 5 are mechanical projects*). This will be updated as projects are completed and/or changed. Since the execution of burns depends on air quality conditions, fire workload, fuel moistures, and weather, the times listed here are **estimates only**. Check the new "Current Fire Information" webpage (see box on page 2) to keep informed on which projects are coming up and which have been completed.

Grant Grove

Quail Flat

110 acres
(June / July)

Valley View

217 acres
(Sept. / Oct.)

Grant East G

252 acres
(June / July)

Wilsonia*

83 acres
(July / August)

Hazard Tree*

150 acres
(July / August)

Cedar Grove

Lewis Creek

1,000 acres
(Sept. / Oct.)

Giant Forest/ Lodgepole

Tharp's

502 acres
(June / July)

Lodgepole*

10 acres
(July / August)

Backcountry

Bearpaw*

6 acres
(June / July)

Kings
Canyon
National
Park

Sequoia
National
Park

Lake Kaweah

Foothills

Ash Mountain

25 acres
(June)

Mineral King

Atwood

2,450 acres
(July)

Highbridge

1,466 acres
(Sept. / Oct.)

Oriole Lake*

20 acres
(July / August)

*mechanical fuel reduction projects



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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About this Newsletter

This annual newsletter is designed to provide quality fire information for the residents of local communities near Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. First mailed in 1999, this issue is the fifth edition.

NPS Fire & Fuels Management

